

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# All THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 629. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1880.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## ASPHODEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIXEN," "LADY U  
SECRET," ETC.

### CHAPTER XXI. "FOR WELE OR WO, FOR CAROLE, OR FOR DAUNCE."

EDGAR went back to the ball-room with his heart so penetrated with bliss, that the whole scene had an unreal look to him in its brightness and gaiety, as if in the next instant dancers, and lights, and music, and familiar faces might vanish altogether, and leave him suspended in empty space, alone with his own deep delight. He was as near Berkeley's idea of the universe as a man so solid and substantial in his habits could be. Thought and feeling to-night made up his world ; all the rest might be nothing but a spectral emanation from his own brain. He lived, he thought, he felt ; and his heart and brain were filled with one idea, and that was Daphne. The ball-room without Daphne, albeit the Caledonians were just being danced with considerable spirit, was all falsehood and hollowness. He saw the spurious complexions, the scanty draperies, all the artificial graces, and meretricious charms, as he had not seen them while she was there. That little leaven had leavened the whole lump. His eye, gladdened by her presence, had seen all things fair. But although he was inclined to look contemp-tuously upon the crowd in which she was not, his heart so brimmed over with joy as to make him good-naturedly disposed to all creation. He would have liked to leave that gay and festive scene immediately ; but finding his mother enjoying herself very much in a snug corner with three other matrons, all in after-supper spirits, he consented to wait till Mrs. Turchill had seen one or two more dances.

"I like to watch them, Edgar," she said, "though I feel very thankful to Providence that we didn't dance in the same style, or wear such tight dresses in my time. I remember reading that they wore scanty skirts and hardly any bodices in the period of the French Revolution, and that some of their fashionable women even went so far as to appear with bare feet, which is almost too revolting to mention. All I can say is, that I hope the dresses I see to-night are not the signs of an approaching revolution in England : but I should hardly be surprised if they were. Do go and get a nice partner and let me see you waltz, Edgar. You've improved wonderfully since the Infirmary Ball last year."

"I'm glad you think so, mother, but I shan't dance any more to-night. I made no engagements for after supper except with Daphne, and she has gone home."

"Oh, the South Hill people have gone, have they ? Well, if you're not going to dance any more perhaps we may as well be going too," said Mrs. Turchill, perceiving that a good many of the county people were slipping quietly away, and not wishing to be left with the ruck. So Edgar, very glad to escape, gave his mother his arm and assisted her to the cloak-room, where she completely extinguished herself in a valuable though somewhat old-fashioned set of sables, which covered her from head to foot, and made her look like a walking haystack.

How full of happy fancies the young man's mind was as they drove through the lanes and cross-country roads to Hawks-yard, under that brilliant sky so peopled with worlds of light—"gods, or the abodes of gods ;" he cared to-night no more than Sardanapalus what those stars might be—with now a view of distant hills, far

away towards the famous Wrekin, a cloud-like spot in the extreme distance, and now vivid gleams of the nearer river, glittering under those glittering stars.

"Isn't it a delicious night, mother?" he cried, and only a gentle snore—a snore expressive of the blissfulness of repose after exertion—breathed from the matronly mass of furred cloak and hood.

He was quite alone—glad to be alone—alone with his new sense of happiness, and the starry night, and the image of his dear love.

She had spoken him fair; she meant to make him happier than man ever was upon earth, since the earth could have produced but one Daphne. She must have meant something by those delicious words, that sweet spontaneous praise. Unsolicited she had taken his hand and pressed it with affectionate warmth—she who had been so cold to him—she who had never evinced one touch of tender feeling before; only a frank sisterly kindness, which was more galling than cruelty. And to-night she had lifted up her eyes and looked at him—eyes so mournfully sweet, so exquisitely beautiful.

"My angel, that marble heart is melted at last," he said to himself. "Who would not be constant, for such a reward?"

He had only been in love with Daphne a little over six months, yet it seemed to him now that in that half year lay the drama of his life. All that went before had been only prologue. True that he had fancied himself in love with Madoline—the lovely and gracious lady of his youthful dreams—but this was but the false light that comes before the dawn. He felt some touch of shame at having been so deceived as to his own feelings. He remembered that afternoon in the meadows between South Hill and Arden Rectory, when he had poured his woes into Daphne's sympathising ear; when she, his idol of to-night, his idol for ever more, had seemed to him only a pretty school-girl in a muslin frock. Was she the same Daphne? Was he the same Edgar? She who now was a goddess in his sight. He who wondered that he could ever have cared for any other woman. The disciple of Condillac, when he sits himself down seriously to think out the question whether the rose which he touches and smells is really an independent existence, or only a thing of his own imagining, was never in a more bewildered condition than honest Edgar Turchill when he remembered how devotedly, despairingly, undyingly, he

had once loved—or fancied that he loved—Madoline.

"Romeo was the same," he told himself sheepishly, having taken to reading Shakespeare of late, to curry favour with that fervid little Shakespearian Daphne; "madly in love with Rosaline at noon—over head and ears in love with Juliet before midnight. And critics say that Shakespeare knew the human heart."

Sleep that night was impossible for the master of Hawksyard. Happily there was but a brief remnant of the night left in which he need lie tossing on his sleepless couch, staring at the brown oak panels, on which the reflection of the night-lamp glimmered like a dim star-beam in a turbid pool. Cold wintry dawn came creeping over the hills, and at the first streak of daylight he was up and in his icy bath, and then on with his riding-clothes and away to the stable, where only one sleepy underling was moving slowly about with a lantern, calling drowsily to the horses to stand up and come out of a warm stable, in order to be tied to a wall and have pails of water thrown at them in a cold yard.

To saddle Black Pearl with his own hands was but five minutes' work, and in less than five more he was clattering under the archway and off to the nearest bit of open country to take it out of the mare, who had not done any work for a week, and was in a humour to take a good deal out of her rider. Edgar this morning felt as if he could conquer the wildest horse that ever was foaled—nay, the Prince of Darkness himself, had he been called upon to wrestle with him under an equine guise.

A hard gallop over a broad expanse of flat common, where the winter rime lay silver-white above the russet sward, cooled horse and rider; and, after a long round by lane and wood, Edgar rode quietly back to Hawksyard between ten and eleven, just in time to find his mother seated at her breakfast, and wondering at her own dissipation.

After this unusually late breakfast Mr. Turchill went to look at his horses, a regular thing on a non-hunting morning. "I took it out of the mare," he said, as Black Pearl stood reeking in her box, waiting to cool down before she was groomed.

"Indeed, you have, sir," answered his head man—a faithful creature, but not ceremonious with a master he adored. "You don't mean hunting her to-morrow, I suppose?"

"Well, yes, I did. Don't you think she'll be fit?"

"I think you've pretty well whacked her out for the next week to come. She won't touch her corn."

"Poor old woman," said Edgar, going into the box and fondling the beautiful black head. "Did we go too fast, my girl? It was as much your fault as mine, my beauty. I think we were both bewitched; but I must take the nonsense out of you, somehow, before you carry a lady."

"You didn't think of putting a lady on that mare, did you, sir?" asked the groom.

"Yes, I do. I think she'd carry a lady beautifully."

"So she would, sir; but she wouldn't carry the same lady twice. There'd be very little left of the lady when she'd done."

"Think so, Jarvey? Then we must find something better for the lady—something as safe as a house, and as handsome as—as paint," concluded Edgar, whose mind was not richly stocked with poetical similes. "If you hear of anything very perfect in the market you can let me know."

"Yes, sir."

It seemed early in the day to think of buying a horse for a wife who was yet to be won; but, encouraged by those few words of Daphne's, Edgar saw all the future in so rosy a light that, this morning, freshened and exhilarated by his long ride, he felt as secure of happiness as if the wedding-bells were ringing their gay joy-peal over the flat green fields and winding waters. He was longing to see Daphne again, to win from her some confirmation of his hopes; and now, as he moved about the poultry-yard and gardens, he was counting the minutes which must pass before he could with decency present himself at South Hill.

It would not do for him to go there before luncheon. Everybody would be tired. Afternoon tea time would perhaps be the more agreeable hour. It was a period of the day in which women always seemed to him more friendly and amiable than at any other time—content to lay aside the most entralling book, or the newest passion in fancy-work, and to abandon themselves graciously to the mild pleasures of society.

The afternoon was so fine that he went on foot to pay his visit, glad to get rid of the time between luncheon and five o'clock in a leisurely six-mile walk. It was a delicious walk by meadow, and copse, and river-side, and although Edgar knew every inch of the way he loved Nature in all her moods so well, that the varying beauties of

a frosty winter afternoon were as welcome to his eye and spirit as the lush loveliness of midsummer; and he was thinking of Daphne all the way, picturing her smile of greeting, feeling the thrilling touch of her hand, warm in his own.

Madoline, or Sir Vernon, would ask him to dinner, no doubt; and then, some time during the evening, he would be able to get Daphne all to himself in the conservatory, on the stairs, in the corridor. His heart and mind were so full of purpose that he felt what he had to say could be said briefly. He would ask her if she had not repented her cruelty that night in the walnut-walk; if she had not found out that true love, even from a somewhat inferior kind of person, was worth having—a jewel not to be flung under the feet of swine. And then, and then, she would lift up those sweet eyes to his face—as she had done last night—and he would clasp her unreproved in his arms, and know himself utterly blest. Life could hold no more delight. Death might come that moment and find him content to die.

It was dusk when he came to South Hill, a frosty twilight, with a crimson glow of sunlight low down in the grey sky, and happy robins chirruping in the plantations, where the purple rhododendrons flowered so luxuriantly in spring time, and where scarlet berries of holly and mountain ash enlivened the dull dark greenery of winter. The house on the hill, with its many windows, some shining with fire-light from within, others reflecting the ruddier light in the sky, made a pleasant picture after a six-mile tramp through a somewhat lonely landscape. It looked a hospitable house, a house full of happy people, a house where a man might find a temporary haven from the cares of life. To Edgar's eye the fire-light shining from within was like a welcome.

"Miss Lawford at home?" he enquired.

"Not at home," answered the footman with a decisive air.

Now there is something much more crushing in the manner of a footman, when he tells you that his people are out, than in that of the homelier parlour-maid who gives the same information. The girl would fain reconcile you to the blow; she sympathises with you in your disappointment. Perhaps she offers you the somewhat futile consolation implied in the fact that her mistress has only just stepped out, or comforts you with the distant hope that your friend will be home to dinner. She would be glad if

she could to lessen your regret. But the well-trained man-servant looks at you with the blank and stony gaze of a blind destiny. His voice is doom. "Not at home," he says curtly; and if, perchance, there be any expression in his face, it will be a veiled scorn, as who should say, "Not at home—to you."

But Edgar was in a mood not to be daunted by the most icy of menials—a Warwickshire bumpkin two years ago, but steeped to the lips in the languid insolence of May Fair to-day.

"Is Miss Daphne Lawford at home?" he asked.

The footman believed, with supreme indifference, as if the presence or absence of a younger daughter who was not an heiress were a question he could hardly stoop to contemplate, that Miss Daphne Lawford might possibly be found upon the premises, and he further condescended to impart the information that Miss Lawford had driven to the Abbey with Mrs. Ferrers and Mr. Goring to see the improvements.

"I'll go and find her for myself," said Edgar, too eager to wait for forms and ceremonies; "I daresay she is in the morning-room."

He passed the servant, and went straight to the pretty room where he had been so much at home for the last ten years. There were no lamps or candles; Daphne was sitting alone in the fire-light, in one of those low roomy chairs which modern upholsterers delight in—sitting alone, with neither book nor work, and Fluff, the Maltese terrier, curled up in her lap.

Her eyelids were lowered, and Edgar approached her softly, thinking she was asleep; but at the sound of his footfall she looked up, gently, gravely, without any surprise at his coming.

"I hope that you are better—quite well in fact; that you have entirely recovered from your fatigue last night," he began tenderly.

"I am quite well," she answered almost angrily, and blushing crimson with vexation. "Pray don't make a fuss about it. Waltzing so long made me giddy. That was all."

Her snappish tone was a cruel change after her sweetness last night. Edgar's heart sank very low at this unexpected rebuff.

"You are all alone," he said feebly.

"Unless you count Fluff and the squirrel, yes. But they are very good company," answered Daphne, brightening a little, and smiling at him with that provoking kind-

ness, that easy friendliness, which always chilled his soul. It was so hopelessly unlike the feeling he wished to awaken.

"Madoline drove to the Abbey with Aunt Rhoda and Mr. Goring directly after luncheon. The new hot-houses are finished, I believe, at last. I have been horribly lazy. I only came down an hour ago."

"I am glad you were able to sleep," said Edgar. "It was more than I could do."

"I suppose nobody ever does sleep much after a ball," answered Daphne. "The music goes on repeating itself over and over again in one's brain, and one goes spinning round in a perpetual imaginary waltz. I was thinking all last night of Don Ramiro and Donna Clara."

"Friends of yours?" enquired Edgar.

Daphne's eyes sparkled at the question, but she did not laugh. She only looked at him with a compassionate smile.

"You have never read Heine?"

"Never. Is it interesting?"

"Heinrich Heine. He was a German poet, don't you know. As great a poet, almost, as Byron."

"Unhappily I don't read German."

"Oh, but some of his poetry has been translated. The translations are not much like the original, but still they are something."

"And who is Don—Ra—what's-his-name?" enquired Edgar, still very much in the dark.

"The hero of a ballad—an awful, ghastly, ghostly ballad, ever so much ghastlier than Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogene, and the worms they crept in, and the worms they crept out, don't you know. He is dead, and she has jilted him and married somebody else; and he has promised her on the eve of her wedding that he will come to the wedding feast, and he comes and waltzes with her, and she doesn't know that he is dead, and she reproaches him for wearing a black cloak at her bridal, and she asks him why his cheeks are snow-white, and his hands ice-cold, and they go on whirling round all the time, the trumpets blowing and the drums beating, and to all she says he gives the same answer:

"Said I not that I would come? That awful ballad was in my mind all night, and when I did at last fall asleep, I dreamt I was at the ball again, and instead of Stratford Town Hall we were in an old Gothic palace at Toledo, and—and—the person I was dancing with was Don Ramiro. His white dead face looked down at me, and all the people vanished, and

we were dancing alone in the dark cold hall."

She shuddered at the recollection of her dream, clasping her hands before her face, as if to shut out some hideous sight.

" You ought not to read such poetry," said Edgar, deeply concerned. " How can people let you have such books ? "

" Oh, there is no harm in the book. You know I adore poetry. Directly I was able to write a German exercise, I got hold of Heine, and began to spell out his verses. They are so sweet, so mournful, so full of a patient despair."

" You have too much imagination," said Edgar. " You ought to read sober solid prose."

" Blair's Lectures, Sturm's Reflections, Locke on the Understanding," retorted Daphne, laughing. " No ; I like books that take me out of myself and into another world."

" But if they only take you into charnel-houses, among ghosts and dead people, I don't see the advantage of that."

" Don't you ? There are times when anything is better than one's own thoughts."

" Why should you shrink from thought ? " asked Edgar tenderly. " You can have nothing painful to remember or think about ; unless," he added, seeing an opening, " you feel remorseful for having been so cruel to me."

He had drawn his chair close to hers in the fire-light—the ruddy, comfortable light which folded them round like a rosy cloud. She sat far back in her downy nest, almost buried in its soft depths, her eyes gazing dreamily at the fire, her sunny hair glittering in the fitful light. If she had been looking him full in the face, in broad day, Edgar Turchill could hardly have been so bold.

" I did feel very sorry, last night, when you were so good to me," she said slowly.

" Good to you ! Why, I did nothing ! "

" You are so loyal and good. I saw it all last night, as if your heart had suddenly been spread open before me like a book. I think I read you plainly last night for the first time. You are faithful and true; a gentleman to the core of your heart. All men ought to be like that : but they are not."

" You can have had very little experience of their short-comings," said Edgar, his heart glowing at her praise. And then, emboldened, and yet full of fear, he hastened to take advantage of her humour.

" If you can trust me ; if you think me in the slightest measure worthy of these sweet words, which might be a much better man's crown of bliss, why will you not make me completely happy ? I love you so truly, so dearly, that, if to have an honest man for your slave can help to make your life pleasant, you had better take me. I know that I am not worthy of you, that you are as high above me in intellect, and grace, and beauty, as the stars are in their mystery and splendour; but a more brilliant man might not be quite so ready to mould himself according to your will, to sink his own identity in yours, to be your very slave, in fact ; to have no purpose except to obey you."

" Don't," cried Daphne. " If you were my husband, I should want you to make me obey. I am not such a fool as to want a slave."

" Let me be your husband ; we can settle afterwards who shall obey," pleaded Edgar, leaning with folded arms upon the broad elbow of her chair, trying to get as near her as her entrenched position would allow.

" I like you very much. After Madeline, there is no one I like better," faltered Daphne ; " but I am not the least little bit in love with you. I suppose it is wrong to be so candid ; but I want you to know the truth."

" If you like me well enough to marry me, I am content."

" Really and truly ? Content to accept liking instead of love ; confidence and frank straightforward friendship instead of sentimental romance."

" I do not care a straw for romance. And to be liked and trusted—well, that is something. So long as there is no one else you have ever liked better——"

The face turned towards the fire quivered with the passing of a strong emotion, but Edgar could only see the thick ripples of golden hair making a wavy line above the delicate ear, and the perfect outline of the throat, rising out of its soft lace ruffle like the stem of a lily from among its leaves.

" Who else is there for me to like ? " she asked with a faint laugh.

" Then, dearest, I would rather have your liking than any other woman's love : and it shall go hard with me if liking do not grow to love before our lives are ended," said Edgar, clasping the hand that lay inert upon Fluff's silky back.

The Maltese resented the liberty by an ineffectual snap.

"Please don't—don't think it quite settled yet," cried Daphne, scared by this hand-clasp, which seemed like taking possession of her. "You must give me time to breathe—time to think. I want to be worthy of you, if I can—if—if—I am ever to be your wife. I want to be loyal—and honest—as you are."

"Only say that you will be my wife. I can trust you with the rest of my fate."

"Give me a few days—a few hours, at least—to consider."

"But why not to-day. Let it be to-day," he pleaded passionately, his soul kindled at being so near the paradise it longed for.

"You must give me a little while," answered Daphne, smiling faintly at his impatience, which seemed to her something childish, she not being touched by the same passion, or inspired by the same hope, being, as it were, outside the circle of his thoughts. "If—if—you are very anxious to be answered—let it be to-day."

"Bless you, darling."

"But don't be grateful in advance. The answer may be No."

"It must not. You would not break my heart a second time."

"Ah, then you contrived to mend it after the first breakage," retorted Daphne, laughing with something of her old mirth. "Madoline broke it first, and you patched it together and made quite a good job of it, and then offered it to me. Well, if you really wish it you shall have your answer to-night. I must speak to Lina first."

"I know she will be on my side."

"Tremendously. You will dine here of course. And I suppose you will go away at about eleven o'clock. You know the window of my room."

"Know it!" cried Edgar, who had lingered to gaze at that particular casement under every condition of sky and temperature. "Know it! Did Romeo know Juliet's balcony?"

"Well, then, at ten minutes past eleven look up at my window. If the answer be No, the shutters will be shut, and all dark. If the answer be Yes, the lamp shall be in the window."

"Oh, blessed light. I know the lamp will be there."

"And now no more of this nonsense," said Daphne imperatively. "I am going to give you some tea."

"Put a dose of poison in it, and finish me off straight, if the lamp is not going to shine in your window."

"Absurd man! Do you suppose I know any more than you what the answer is to be. We are the sport of Fate."

The door was opened gently as if it had been the entrance to a sick man's chamber, and the well-drilled footman brought in a little folding table, and then a tea-tray, an intensely new-fashioned old-fashioned oval wooden tray, with an open railing, and oriental cups and saucers à la Belinda, everything strictly of the hoop and patch period. These frivolities of tray and tea-things were one of Mr. Goring's gifts to his mistress.

Not another tender word would Daphne allow from her lover. She talked of the people at the hall, asked for details about everybody. The girl in the pink frock; the matron with hardly any frock at all; the hunting men and squires of high degree. She kept Edgar so fully employed answering her questions that he had no time to edge in an amorous speech, though his whole being was breathing love.

Madoline and Gerald Goring came in and found them tête-à-tête by the fire. They had made a détour on their way home, and had deposited Mrs. Ferrers at the Rectory. It was the first time Gerald had seen Daphne since the ball.

"Better?" he said, with a little friendly nod.

"Quite well, thanks. I have not been ill," she answered curtly.

Mr. Goring seated himself in a shadowy corner, remote from the little group by the tea-table.

"Shall I ring for more tea, or have you had some at the Abbey?" asked Daphne, with a business-like air.

"We had tea in Lady Geraldine's room," answered Madoline. "I wish you had been with us, Daphne. It is such a lovely room in the fire-light. The houses are all finished, and M'Closkie has filled three of them already. Such lovely flowers! I can't imagine where he has found them."

"Easy to do that kind of thing when one has a floating balance of fifty thousand or so at one's bankers," answered Edgar cheerily. "My wife will have to put up with a few old orange-trees that have been at Hawksyard for a century."

The tone in which he uttered those two words "my wife," startled Gerald out of his reverie. There was a world of suppressed delight and triumph in the utterance.

"He has been asking her to marry him, and she has relented, and accepted him,"

he thought, hardly knowing whether to be glad or angry.

Was it not ever so much better that she should reward this faithful fellow's devotion, and marry, and be happy in the beaten track of life? He had told himself once that she was a creature just a little too bright and lovely for treading beaten tracks, a girl who ought to be the heroine of some romantic history. Yet, are these heroines of romance the happiest among women? Was the young woman who was sewn up in a sack and drowned in the Bosphorus happy, though her fate inspired one of the finest poems that ever was written? Was Sappho particularly blest, or Hero, Heloise, or Juliet? Their fame was the fruit of exceptional disaster, and not of exceptional joy. The Greek was wise who said that the happiest she is the woman who has no history.

Sir Vernon Lawford came in while they were all talking of the hot-houses, and asked for a cup of tea, an unusual condescension on his part, and which fluttered Daphne a little as she rang the bell for a fresh tea-pot.

"Don't trouble yourself, my dear. Give me anything you have there," he said, more kindly than he was wont to speak. "So you were too tired to show at luncheon. Your aunt says you danced too much."

"It was her first ball," pleaded Madoline. "Yes; the first, but not likely to be the last. She is launched now, and will have plenty of invitations. A foolish friend of mine told me that Daphne was the belle of the ball."

"She was," said Edgar sturdily. "I saw two old women standing on a rout-seat to look at her."

"Is that conclusive?" asked Sir Vernon good-humouredly, and with a shrewd glance from Edgar to his fair-haired daughter.

"I think people must have been demented if they wasted a look upon me, while Lina was in the room," said Daphne.

"Oh, but everyone knows Lina," answered her father, pleased at this homage to his beloved elder daughter. "You are a novelty."

He was proud of her success, in spite of himself; proud that she should have burst upon his Warwickshire friends like a revelation of hitherto unknown beauty—unknown, at least, since his second wife, in all the witchery of her charms, had turned the heads of the county twenty years ago. That beauty had been a fatal dower—fatal to her, fatal to him—and he had often told himself that Daphne's

prettiness was a perilous thing; to be looked at with the eye of fear and suspicion rather than of love. And yet he was pleased at her triumph, and inclined to be kinder on account thereof.

They seemed a happy family-party at dinner that day. Madoline was full of delight in the improvement of her future home—full of gratitude to her betrothed for the largeness with which he had anticipated her wishes. Edgar was in high spirits; Daphne all gaiety; Sir Vernon unusually open in speech and manner. If Gerald was more silent than the others, nobody noticed his reserve. He had been quiet all day, and when Madoline had questioned him as to the cause, had owned to not being particularly well.

Later in the evening they all adjourned to the billiard-room, with the exception of Daphne, who pleaded a headache, and bade everyone good-night; but about an hour afterwards, between ten and eleven, Madoline, who had just gone up to her room, was startled by a knock at her door, and then by the apparition of Daphne in her long white dressing-gown.

"My pet, I thought you went to bed an hour ago."

"No, dear. I had a headache, but I was not sleepy."

"My poor darling; you are so pale and heavy-eyed. Come to the fire."

Madoline wanted to instal her in one of the cosy arm-chairs by the hearth, but Daphne slipped to her favourite seat on the fleecy white rug at her sister's feet.

"No, dear; like this," she said, looking up at Madoline with tearful eyes; "at your feet—always at your feet; so much lower than you in all things—so little worthy of your love."

"Daphne, it offends me to hear you talk like that. You are all that is sweet and dear. You and I are equal in all things, except fortune: and it shall not be my fault if we are not made equal in that."

"Fortune!" echoed Daphne drearily. "Oh, if you but knew how little I value that. It is your goodness I revere—your purity, your——"

She burst into tears, and sobbed passionately, with her face hidden on her sister's knee.

"Daphne, what has happened—what has grieved you so? Tell me, darling; trust me."

"It is nothing; mere foolishness of mine."

"You have something to tell me, I know."

"Yes," answered Daphne, drying her

tears hastily and looking up with a grave set face. "I have come to ask your advice. I mean to abide by your decision, whichever way it may fall. Edgar wants me to marry him, and I have promised him an answer to-night. Shall it be Yes or No?"

"Yes, of course, my pet, if you love him."

"But I don't; not the least atom. I have told him so in the very plainest straightest words I could find. But he still wishes me to be Mrs. Turchill, and he seems to think that when I have been married to him twenty years or so I shall get really attached to him—as Mrs. John Anderson, my Jo, did, don't you know? She may have cared very little for Mr. Anderson in the outset."

"Oh, Daphne," sighed Madoline, with a distressed look, "this is very puzzling. I don't know what to say. I like Edgar so much—I value him so highly—and I should dearly like you to marry him."

"You would!" cried Daphne decisively. "Then that settles it. I shall marry him."

"But you don't care for him."

"I care for you. I would do anything in this world—yes," with sudden energy, "the most difficult thing, were it at the cost of my life—to make you happy. Would it make you happy for me to marry Edgar?"

"I believe it would."

"Then I'll do it. Hark! there's the outer door shutting," cried Daphne, as the hall-door closed with a hollow reverberation. "Edgar will be under my window in a minute or two. I'll run and give him my answer."

"What do you mean?"

"A lamp in my window is to signify Yes."

"Go and put the lamp there, darling. May it be a star for you both, shining upon the beginning of a bright, happy life!"

A few minutes later Edgar, standing in the shubbery-walk, with his eyes fixed on Daphne's casement, the owner of them unconscious of winter's cold, saw the bright spot of light stream out upon the darkness, and knew that he was to be blest. He went home like a man in a happy dream, scarce knowing by what paths he went; and it is a mercy he did not walk into the Avon and incontinently drown himself.

#### ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

At the foundation of Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well lies Boccaccio's story of Giletta of Narbona. The English poet

may or may not have understood Italian and studied his theme in its original language; it is probable that he availed himself of the translation by William Painter contained in his Palace of Pleasure, a collection of romances published in 1575. The main incidents of the novelette reappear in the play, new characters being added by the dramatist. Giletta becomes Helena, and Beltramo is anglicised into Bertram; the Countess, Parolles, and the Clown have no existence in the Italian story, and of course the more comic scenes of the play, in which Parolles specially figures, are entirely attributable to Shakespeare. Upon the story of Giletta of Narbona, it may be noted, was also founded Virginia, one of the oldest of Italian comedies, written by Bernardo Accoti, and printed in 1513.

All's Well that Ends Well was first printed in the first folio collection of Shakespeare's plays, 1623. It has been judged, however, that All's Well that Ends Well came into existence some five-and-twenty years before that date, and was really the comedy which Francis Meres, in his little book called Palladis Tamia, published in 1598, referred to under the title of Love's Labour's Won: no other play bearing that name having been discovered, while, as Malone has urged, no other play could have borne that name with so much propriety as All's Well that Ends Well. Coleridge is of the same opinion, describing the play as "originally intended as the counterpart of Love's Labour's Lost." Dumain is the name of one of the lords attending upon the King of Navarre in Love's Labour's Lost; and two Dumains, French captains serving in the Florentine War, appear in All's Well that Ends Well; otherwise the plays can hardly be said to resemble each other, or can be only considered as companions with little correspondence between them. That the comedy has come down to us in a corrected and altered form has been often maintained. "No intelligent person," declares Mr. Furnivall, "can read the play without being struck by the contrast of early and late work in it. The stiff formality of the rhymed talk between Helena and the King is due, not to etiquette, but to Shakespeare's early time; so also the end of the play, &c."

All's Well that Ends Well may not be counted among the more popular plays of Shakespeare. "The story of Bertram and Diana," comments Johnson, "had been

told before of Mariana and Angelo, and, to confess the truth, scarcely merited to be heard a second time." It is not likely, however, that offence was taken at the nature of the story; at any rate, dramatists of a later period dealt successfully with the subject; particularly, as Tom Davies has noted, Shirley in his *Gamester*, and Cibber in his first comedy of *Love's Last Shift*. It might be added that in the modern play of *Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle*, by Alexandre Dumas the elder, the Duc de Richelieu is tricked very much as Bertram is deceived in All's Well that Ends Well. Bertram can never have obtained acceptance as a satisfactory hero of romance. The majority of readers will probably find themselves agreeing with Johnson when he writes: "I cannot reconcile my heart to Bertram, a man noble without generosity, and young without truth; who marries Helena as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate; when she is dead by his unkindness sneaks home to a second marriage, is accused by a woman whom he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness." For the worthlessness of Bertram compensation must be sought in the excellence of Helena, described by Coleridge as Shakespeare's "loveliest character." Mrs. Jamieson has also written of Helena: "There never was, perhaps, a more beautiful picture of a woman's love cherished in secret, not self-consuming in silent languishment, not desponding over its idol, but patient and hopeful, strong in its own intensity and sustained by its own fond faith. Her love is like a religion, pure, holy, deep." The real interest of the play is, no doubt, more serious than comic; but in representation, probably, the incidents connected with the boasting and the cowardice of Parolles acquired special prominence. Johnson held that "many of the lineaments of Falstaff" might be discovered in Parolles; he presents, however, a closer resemblance to Pistol. Parolles is, as Helena describes him, "a notorious liar, a great way fool, solely a coward;" he has nothing of Falstaff's wit, humour, and joviality.

Concerning the actors who originally appeared in All's Well that Ends Well little can now be stated. From the fact that the two speakers in the first scene of the second act, whom Rowe and all later editors have called "First" and "Second Lord," are called in the folio editions, "Lord G." and "Lord E.", it has been

suggested that two actors, whose names began respectively with G and E, first sustained these characters. The list of the "Principal Actors" prefixed to the first folio, 1623, has been examined therefore, and found to contain the names of Gilburne, Gouge, and Ecclestone; and it has been thought that Gilburne or Gouge and Ecclestone duly appeared as the First and Second Lord when the comedy was first presented. It has been supposed, too, that the same players took the parts of the "two gentlemen," who in the second scene of the third act bring the letter from Bertram to Helena, and whose speeches are assigned in the first folio to Fren. G. and Fren. E. Mr. Payne Collier interprets these words to mean "French Envoy," and "French Gentleman;" but it has been pointed out that one was as much an envoy as the other, and that they are referred to as "two gentlemen" in the stage direction. Moreover, Mr. Collier's interpretation leaves the "Lord G." and "Lord E." of the other scenes altogether unexplained. It may be added that of the players Gouge, Gilburne, and Ecclestone, very little is known. It is believed that Gouge was in his youth an actor of female characters; that he married in 1603, and died in 1624, his son Alexander being "the woman actor of the Blackfriars" mentioned by James Wright in his *Historia Histrionica*. Ecclestone appears to have enjoyed a good position as an actor; his name is inserted in the lists of performers in Ben Jonson's *Cataline and Alchemist*, and in several of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher.

Apparently the play did not take very deep root in the theatre, or in the favour of playgoers; at least, we have no evidence of its success upon the stage during the poet's own time and the years that followed. The Civil War left All's Well that Ends Well inanimate enough. The Restoration ignored the play; the adapters did not trouble it. It underwent no process of revival until 1741, when on the 7th March, at the small unauthorised theatre in Goodman's Fields, a performance took place for the benefit of Mrs. Giffard, the manager's wife, of All's Well that Ends Well, "written by Shakespeare," as the playbills announced, "and not acted since his time." Mrs. Giffard's Helena was supported by the Bertram of Mr. Giffard, the King of Mr. Crisp, the Parolles of Petersen, the Lafeu of Paget, the Clown of Yates, and the Countess of Mrs. Steel.

Success seems to have attended the representation, for it was repeated on the 17th, 21st, 30th March, and on the 3rd April. But a few weeks before Mr. Giffard had distinguished himself by reviving *The Winter's Tale*, "not acted for one hundred years," as he advertised.

Davies had forgotten all about these performances at Goodman's Fields when he wrote in the second volume of his *Dramatic Miscellanies*, that "*All's Well that Ends Well*, after having lain more than a hundred years undisturbed upon the prompter's shelf, was in October, 1741, revived at the theatre in Drury Lane." The correct date of the revival seems to be the 22nd January, 1742. Mills acted Bertram, and Milward the King of France; Theophilus Cibber appeared as Parolles, Macklin as the Clown, and Berry as Lafeu; the beautiful Mrs. Woffington personating Helena. Davies relates that the players agreed to call *All's Well that Ends Well* "the 'unfortunate comedy,' from the disagreeable accidents which fell out several times during the acting of it." In the course of the first act Mrs. Woffington was taken suddenly ill, and fainted away, as she stood in the wings ready to enter. The part of Helena was therefore read by another actress, probably Mrs. Mills. The play was announced for repetition a night or two afterwards, when, "if Mrs. Woffington would not be well enough, Mrs. Mills would be prepared in the part." But the performance was postponed until the 16th February, in consequence of the fatal illness of Milward, the representative of the King of France. He "caught a distemper," as Davies expresses it, from wearing in this part "too light and airy a suit of clothes." One of his fellow-actors remarked that he was shivering; but Milward demanded gallantly: "How is it possible for me to be sick when I have such a physician as Mrs. Woffington?" He was under forty, a skilful and pleasing actor, if somewhat inclined to be vociferous, priding himself upon "the sweetness and harmony of his tones," and with some justice, if Aaron Hill was correct in ascribing to him a voice that "comprehended and expressed the utmost compass of harmony." He was comely of aspect, graceful in his deportment; celebrated for his Castalio, Jaffier, and Oronooko, while excelling most in characters "where distress is dignified by superiority of rank or rendered venerable by age or paternal affection;" his Lusignan in Zara being

accounted "not much inferior to Garrick's." Davies mentions other misfortunes as occurring to this revival of *All's Well that Ends Well*. "Mrs. Ridout, a pretty woman and a pleasing actress, after having played Diana one night, was, by the advice of her physician, forbidden to act during a month. Mrs. Butler, in the Countess of Rousillon, was likewise seized with a distemper in the progress of this play." Genest, however, finding that the names of these ladies were still retained in the playbills throughout the season, judges that they continued to perform, and pronounces, therefore, Davies's statements to be "totally without foundation."

Nevertheless *All's Well that Ends Well* had given much satisfaction to the public. Milward dead, Delane succeeded to his part of the King of France, acquitted himself respectably where Milward had been affecting, and "in spite of the superstition of some of the players" the play was again brought forward and applauded. Fleetwood, the manager, had promised Macklin that he should play Parolles, but to the actor's great displeasure, by some sort of artifice "as common in theatres as in courts," the part was snatched from him by Theophilus Cibber, whose performance, we are told, met with encouragement, for all "his grimace and false spirit." He was much given to extravagance and caricature upon the stage, but he never offended by flatness and insipidity, although his vivacity was certainly mixed with too much pertness. Berry's Lafeu was found to be the true portrait of a choleric old man and a humorist. The playbill assigned the part of the Clown to Macklin, who may possibly have declined it in his disappointment at not being allowed to appear as Parolles; for Davies commends Chapman's admirable performance of the character; or, forgetting Macklin's share in the representation, Davies may have had in mind a later revival of the play, when Chapman certainly played the Clown.

At Covent Garden Theatre, in 1746, it was announced that there would be a performance, on March 20th, of *All's Well that Ends Well*, for the benefit of Theophilus Cibber, who would appear as Parolles. On the 18th, however, it was announced that the benefit would be postponed, in consequence of a fashionable assembly having been fixed for the same night; due notice, it was added, would be given of the performance. But the actor forthwith abandoned his engagement at Covent

Garden, and attached himself to the rival theatre. As Colley Cibber wrote to his friend Benjamin Victor, in Dublin : "Theophilus is gone over to the enemy in Drury Lane ; but your dramatic heroes are never contented ; so e'en let them fight their own battles." All's Well that Ends Well was therefore produced at Covent Garden without help from Mr. Cibber, Jun. The character of Parolles was allotted to Woodward ; Hall played Bertram ; Chapman, the Clown ; Mrs. Pritchard, Helena ; and Mrs. Horton, the Countess. On the 10th April, Theophilus Cibber took his benefit at Drury Lane, when he personated Lord George Brilliant in his father's comedy of *The Lady's Last Stake* ; Mrs. Clive speaking a prologue "in the cause of liberty," and Mrs. Woffington, in the uniform of a volunteer, delivering an epilogue ; the Pretender was just then fluttering the hearts of London playgoers a good deal, and the theatres, in consequence, had been very poorly attended. Mr. Cibber, Jun., informed the public that all tickets issued for the performance of All's Well that Ends Well, announced to take place at Covent Garden on the 20th March, would be received at Drury Lane on the 10th April, and his advertisement concluded : "As I have, in justice to my creditors, assigned over so much of my salary as reduces the remainder to a very small pittance, I very much depend on the encouragement and indulgence of the town at my benefit, whose favour shall be gratefully remembered by their very humble servant Theophilus Cibber." In a subsequent letter, published in the *General Advertiser*, the actor took the public still further into his confidence, and dealt very frankly with the difficulties and private disagreements that had occurred between himself and his wife.

Davies writes that "under the direction of Mr. Garrick, in 1757, All's Well that Ends Well was again revived," and, "with the help of a pantomime," acted several nights. But this revival at Drury Lane really took place in February, 1756, the playbills, with customary incorrectness, stating that the comedy had not been acted "for eighteen years." Woodward appeared again as Parolles, Palmer as Bertram, Yates as the Clown, Miss Macklin as Helena, and Mrs. Pritchard as the Countess ; Berry resuming the character of Lafeu, and Tom Davies and his wife representing the King of France and Diana. The scene of Parolles and the soldiers in the fourth act afforded much

pleasure to the audience, and was "acted with such theatrical skill," Davies records, "as excited general merriment." The unbinding of Parolles, "who looked about him with anxious surprise and terror, redoubled the bursts of laughter which echoed round the theatre." Woodward was pronounced "excellent in the whole scene, but particularly in characterising Bertram and the Dumains, whose feelings upon the unexpected heap of slander which he threw upon them, served to heighten the scene." The character of the First Soldier, who acts as an interpreter when Parolles supposes himself in the hands of the foreign foe, now acquired special importance. It may be gathered from Davies's account that Chapman "doubled the parts," as the actors call it, and appeared both as Clown and Interpreter. The comedy being represented at Drury Lane in 1758, the Interpreter duly appeared in the list of the dramatis personæ, a Mr. Blakes being assigned the part. Parolles became a favourite part of Woodward's ; he assumed it both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and revived All's Well that Ends Well at Dublin in 1760, when he was one of the managers of the Cork Street Theatre in that city, playing Parolles to the Helena of Mrs. Dancer. At Covent Garden in 1762, and again in 1772, Woodward was Parolles to the Bertram, now of Ross, and now of Lewes, and the Clown of Shuter ; Miss Macklin appearing as Helena at each performance. The famous comedian King first played Parolles at Drury Lane in 1762, and long continued in possession of the part.

At the Haymarket, in 1785, John Bannister, upon the occasion of his benefit, appeared as Parolles, and, his biographer relates, "received throughout the piece warm and well-deserved applause. The character was admirably adapted to his talents, and beneficial to his reputation." The performance was repeated, while it was felt, we are told, that All's Well that Ends Well "could never be a permanent favourite." At this time Edwin played the Clown ; Baddeley, Lafeu ; Miss Farren, Helena ; and Mrs. Inchbald the Countess. In 1793 John Kemble prepared and printed an acting edition of the play, with a list of the performers to whom the parts had been assigned. It appears that Mrs. Siddons was to have played Helena ; Mrs. Ward the Countess ; Mrs. Powell, Diana ; and Barrymore, Lewis, a name bestowed upon one of the young French lords. All's

Well that Ends Well was not produced until December, 1794, however, when certain important changes were made in this pre-arranged cast of the characters. Mrs. Siddons had relinquished her intention to appear as Helena; the part was sustained by Mrs. Jordan, while Mrs. Powell appeared as the Countess, Miss Miller as Diana, and Charles Kemble as Lewis. King played Parolles again, John Bannister undertaking the part of the Clown; Bensley represented the King of France; Aiken, Lafeu; and R. Palmer, the Interpreter. This should have been an effective performance, but it does not seem to have pleased. Boaden, in his biography of Mrs. Jordan, notes that Kemble was "too ill to do anything," and regrets that Mrs. Jordan should have had the trouble of studying the part of Helena for a single night's performance. The beauty of Miss Miller, "promoted from the chorus," is commended, and amusement is said to have been occasioned by the scene of Parolles, "the one scene that can act upon a large stage," but "not a hand was raised," and the play was not repeated, the management hastening to produce with new and splendid scenery, dresses, and decorations, Cobb's opera of *The Cherokee!*

Genest judged that Kemble's alteration of All's Well that Ends Well was very judicious. "He has omitted the weak parts and transposed some speeches with good effect. By not attempting to do too much, he has fitted this comedy for representation without injuring it."

A revival of the play at Covent Garden in 1811 introduced the Bertram of Charles Kemble, the Parolles of Fawcett, the Clown of Blanchard, the Lafeu of Munden, and the Helena of Mrs. H. Johnston; the lady further distinguishing herself by her appearing in the after-piece as the heroine of Timour the Tartar, and riding a "real horse" with much grace and skill. She was, it seems, "a daughter of Mr. Parker, the equestrian, or of Mrs. Parker by a former husband, was quite at home on horseback, and looked and played delightfully." The Dramatic Censor of 1811 highly commended the representation of Shakespeare's comedy, observing that "upon no similar occasion had greater attention been paid to the due preparation of a play." The performers were found to be all perfect in the dialogue, the Florentine costumes were appropriate, and the scenery was "illustrative of the subject."

The performers were held to deserve "much credit for the ability and ardour which they exhibited;" Mr. Munden, Mr. Fawcett, and Mrs. Johnston, "whose characters required greater exertion than the rest of the *dramatis personae*," being specially applauded. Nevertheless, from an account of the performance given by Genest, it seems that Fawcett was hissed as Parolles, and that at the close of the play he placed his written part in Kemble's hands, and declared that he would not again appear in the character. "Then," said Kemble, "you will knock up the play." Fawcett was, however, prevailed upon to act Parolles upon a subsequent occasion. Genest further mentions the revival of the comedy at the Bath Theatre in 1821, commanding the enterprise of the manager, the acting of a Mrs. Weston in the part of the Countess, and generally the respectability of the representation. He adds: "This comedy has rarely proved attractive."

After this, All's Well that Ends Well remained dormant until it was revived for some few nights in 1852 at Sadler's Wells, during Mr. Phelps's management of that theatre. Mr. Phelps won much applause by his ingenious and humorous personations of Parolles; Mr. G. Bennett appearing as the King, Mr. F. Robinson as Bertram, Mr. Barrett as Lafeu, and Miss Cooper as Helena.

#### HIS REWARD.

"YOU are most unjust, Charles, and I know the Lord will one day sting your conscience for your cruelty, and for your heartlessness towards that dear child."

The speaker was a comely lady of about fifty, tall, slim, and upright, and neatly clad in widow's weeds. Charles Pemberton, her eldest son, a handsome, stalwart young man of eight-and-twenty, whom she addressed, answered impatiently:

"Confound the boy, I wish he was dead."

He did not mean that; for he loved his little brother and delighted to make him happy. But his mother had a fatal facility of tongue, and for the last three hours she had been attacking him on this subject with aggressive meekness, and had stung him with half-truths, accusations the letter of which he could not deny, though in their spirit and essence he felt them to be immeasurably false. And now, out of his grief and his impatience, he flung forth those bitter words, angry with himself as

he did so, and rising to leave the room lest his overwrought temper should betray him further.

His saintly mother flung a parting shaft after him.

" You may have your wish sooner than you expect, Charles, and more than that. He will probably not trouble you many years, for he is very delicate ; and I shall not outlive him very long. Then I suppose you will be hap-hap-hap-py."

Charles Pemberton saw the cambric prepared for the shower, and, shuddering, fled; whereupon Mrs. Pemberton retired to her bedroom to pray that her son's hard heart might be softened.

And then from a curtained recess at one end of the old panelled room there came out a little boy of twelve, with blanched serious face, half-parted lips, and wide dark eyes. Towards the close of Mrs. Pemberton's lecture he had entered the room by an open window, unperceived, and, finding that he was the subject of the discourse, he had concealed himself. He had heard only the concluding words and they chilled his very life-blood. He stood now with one hand clutching the curtain.

" So Charles wishes I were dead, does he ? And mother thinks I am going to die to please him. But I won't. I wonder what makes mother think I am going to die. Perhaps she only said it to aggravate Charles. Why should he wish I was dead ? I thought he was fond of me ; " and here he was nearly choked with a rising sob, which he gulped down with difficulty. " I wonder why—I'll ask him."

The next morning, after breakfast, his brother, who had forgotten the incident of the previous day, taking a ball, called out : " Get your bat, Teddy, and let's have half an hour's practice."

As they were walking down to the field Edward suddenly startled his brother by asking :

" Would it be any good to you if I was dead, Charles ? "

" Good to me ! why, Teddy, what are you thinking of ? "

" Well, yesterday you said you wished I was dead ; and you wouldn't wish that if it would be no good to you, would you ? "

Charles stopped abruptly, and said with sternness, " Who told you that ? "

" Nobody. I just came into the room as you said it, and you didn't see me. And ever since I have been wondering why."

Charles Pemberton flung away the bat and ball he was carrying, and clasped the

boy in his arms, kissing him, and hugging him like a girl with a new doll.

" Oh, Teddy, Teddy, Teddy," he said ; " I wish my tongue had been torn out by the roots before I had said such a thing ; but I didn't mean it, Teddy. You never thought I meant it, did you ? Why, Teddy, I wouldn't lose you for all the world, my little playfellow, my brother. It isn't right for me to complain to you of mother, and when I have just told you how it happened that I said those cruel words—that I didn't mean, didn't ever mean, you know, for a moment, Teddy—then you must forget all about it. I had told mother that I wanted to make a man of you, and that it was time you went to school, and learnt to stick up for yourself ; and then she said I was cruel to you, and that I didn't care for you, and lectured and scolded me all the afternoon, and then I forgot myself—which I ought not to have done, for I know it is only her love that makes her over anxious—and I said those hateful words that I never, never, never meant, Teddy."

" I thought you never could mean it, Charles," said the little fellow. He had borne up with wonderful stoicism till now, but the overwhelming sense of relief was too much for him, and he began to weep and sob convulsively.

Then Mrs. Pemberton glided from the shrubbery at hand, made a half-gesture as though she would have clasped the little fellow in her arms, and borne him away, but checking herself, turned on her eldest son a cold reproachful glance, and said :

" It would be less unkind of you, Charles, and more manly, if you are determined to tear the child from me, not to make his remaining days miserable."

And then with aggravating meekness of demeanour she turned once more to the house.

Teddy looked after her with a queer old-fashioned smile on his young face, but, when she was quite hidden from view, he sprang up and clasped his brother's neck, saying :

" I'll go to school, Charlie, and I'll do just as you like, and you'll see if I won't be a man, and I'll win the Greek and Latin prizes, too, if I can ; but you know I'm not clever, Charlie, so you mustn't be disappointed if I don't do that all at once, will you ? "

" I'll trust you, Teddy, my boy, to do the best you can, and none of us can do more than that. I shall miss you sorely, Teddy, but there'll be jolly long holidays, you know,

and we shall have pleasant times together then. And now come on and let's see how you'll guard your wicket. If you don't do me credit as a cricketer, I'll sit on you."

The poor lady's heart was very sore when her boy had gone, and she felt herself alone, and many and dread were the misgivings that darkened her mind. And Charles, too, felt himself alone. They may talk as they will of the solitude of deserts, of arctic wastes, of uninhabited islands, but there is no solitude like that of being shut up in the same house with one whom we love and with whom we would fain hold affectionate intercourse and communion, but who at every advance towards confidence withdraws to some inner shrine and bars our approach.

Mrs. Pemberton's married life had been outwardly calm and uneventful; but she was out of sympathy with her husband, a man of easyjoyful temperament, who scarcely noticed her coldness, and never troubled himself about it; and she had sought consolation in religion. She had fallen under the influence of certain meek fanatics, who held that "the world," and things of the world, were forbidden to them. When her husband died, leaving her only a life-interest in a moderate property, and making his eldest son sole guardian of the boy, she had made some efforts to win over Charles to her views; but his honest healthy nature was absolutely impervious to these narrow notions; he was, according to the jargon of her sect, "given up to a reprobate mind," he belonged to the world from which she had been commanded to "come out and be separate," and day by day the icy crust of reserve in which she lived became thicker and denser; and it was rendered more hard by the feeling of bitterness inspired by the provisions of her husband's will. Charles felt all this acutely. He tried to be, and he was, a good son, but all attempts at filial confidence were repulsed. He had rarely been betrayed into an expression of disrespect, and when he had, his utterances were received with a meekness that was infinitely worse than any reproach. Few as the impatient words were, Mrs. Pemberton bore all these sayings in her heart, and embraced them as "her cross." The kind of fatalism which she had accepted, made her bow with resignation to the will which had decreed the eternal perdition of her elder son in common with that of the overwhelming majority of the human race, but with something of inconsistency she prayed with

passionate earnestness that her younger son might be given to her, and might be gathered into the fold of the elect.

The boy thrived at school. His health, now that he was freed from maternal coddling, improved rapidly. As was to be expected, he did full justice to his brother's diligent coaching in athletics, and, what no one had expected, he developed a wonderful faculty for mathematics. Nothing could be more satisfactory than the reports of his conduct and progress; and nothing brighter and more beautiful than the lad's healthy confidences with his brother in his happy holidays, when he described his school life and the young hopes and ambitions kindling within him.

But Mrs. Pemberton looked on all these things with pious disapproval.

"Charles," she would say sometimes; "you are filling that dear boy's mind full of worldly thoughts, and should the Lord one day open your eyes to see the truth, it will be as gall and wormwood to you to think what you have done."

"Why, mother," he would say, "even the Apostle tells us to be diligent in business; and it is Teddy's business now to get wisdom, and with all his getting to get understanding."

"You talk lightly and frivolously," would be the answer, "for you are of the world, worldly: the letter—which killeth—you know; of the spirit you are ignorant, spiritually blind."

"But, mother——"

"I cannot discuss the matter with you," she would interrupt, "but I will pray that your mind may be enlightened."

And so, with ostentatious meekness she would leave him to grope in outer darkness.

When the term of Teddy's school life was drawing to a close, the head master of the school strongly urged that he should go to Cambridge; and the lad himself, pleased with the idea, was encouraged in his desire by the fact that the dearest of his school friends had just entered St. John's.

But this was an extension of the educational course which had not been contemplated. The Pembertons, though in comfortable circumstances, were not wealthy. By the will of his father only a very moderate sum had been assigned for the boy's education, and this had already been doubled by Charles out of his own limited means in order that he might have the advantages of a superior school. If he went to the University the funds must come

entirely from his elder brother, who would have to deny himself in many ways to arrange matters.

And it was especially hard to do so at this time, for the opportunity had just occurred of purchasing on advantageous terms some fields on which he had long looked with an eye of rational desire.

Old Livermore, his alter ego on the farm, was very urgent that he should buy them.

"There's the sixteen-acre, and Three-ash Field, and Hartley Copse," he said ; "and yow must ha' em, maäster. They just reownd off the propputty beautiful. There han't never bin such a chance, sin' Ay can meeind, and that's gettin' on for fifty year."

"No doubt, Livermore, no doubt," he answered, as he cast a longing eye towards the fields mentioned, lying like a peninsula in the sea of his own estate. "No doubt it is most desirable we should have them ; but I fear if Mr. Edward goes to the University I cannot afford to make the purchase."

"Goes to the 'Varsity !" said Livermore in a tone of contempt ; "and what should Maäster Edward goo to the 'Varsity for, Ay shud laike to know. Old maäster he never went, nor more did yow, and yow both on yow got on very well wi'out it."

"That's very true," replied he ; "but then neither my father nor I had much taste for books, and parson tells me Mr. Edward is a genius and must be cultivated. But I have not absolutely made up my mind yet. I have promised to give Argent my answer next week, and I shall not decide till then."

And so he strode away, his mind pretty well made up to forego the opportunity for which both his father and he had longed, and to send the bright young scholar to distinguish himself on the Cam.

Mrs. Pemberton had been looking forward with hungry desire to the closing of the chapter of Teddy's school experience. He was still young and impressible, and she would have opportunities daily and hourly of guiding his thoughts in the only direction in which, according to her views, they could be profitably employed. Her nature, which hardened more and more to all the rest of the world, concentrated all its tenderness and affection on this boy ; and her dearest hope on this side of the grave was that it might be through her instrumentality that he should separate himself from the world, even as she had done.

When, therefore, a few days after his conversation with Livermore, Charles an-

nounced to her his intention of sending the boy to Cambridge, it was to her a cruel and a bitter blow.

For a few moments she sat in silence, the gloom deepening on her face, and her heart growing icier than ever within her.

"It will not be with my will or with my consent," she said at length, "that he goes. But I know my will and my wish have no weight with you, and that you delight to thwart them."

"Nay, mother," said he mildly, "I am thinking only of Teddy's good. It would be far pleasanter for me to have him at home, but both Dr. Vardy and Mr. L'Oste have assured me that Ted has remarkable abilities, and that he ought to go. The boy himself is eager to go ; and I know he will distinguish himself, if honest work can bring him distinction."

"And what good," she flashed out, "will his distinction do him ? 'Knowledge puffeth up,' and it shall vanish away. There is but one thing needful to know, and of that he is likely to learn little among gay and thoughtless youths whose homes are all of this world. You are willing to gratify your own small and worldly ambition by sacrificing the boy's only true interest."

"Mother," he pleaded, "I wish you would be a little more reasonable—"

"Ay, 'reason !'" she broke in. "Reason is the will-o'-the-wisp that leads you astray, not only to your own undoing, but that of others. You think yourself wise ; and you may be wise in the affairs of this world, but God has said, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, I will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.'"

There was no pity for him in this anticipation of ultimate failure. She was ready with quotations at every turn to justify herself, and to condemn her son. He would gladly have avoided giving her pain, had he known how to do so, but having made up his mind as to what was best for the lad he did not shrink from carrying it out ; and as he walked the fields alone, month after month, he was oppressed by a dull sorrow which he was compelled to bear in utter solitude, for to no living soul could he complain of his mother. His only consolation was that in his college career Teddy fully justified every expectation that had been formed of him.

His last long vacation had come and he was to spend it with his old school-chum, who had been his dearest friend also at college, but had left the University in the

previous year. Turenne Jermyn was a young man whose friendship was worth having, clear-headed, sound-hearted, of exuberant vitality. He had often heard from Teddy of "dear old Charlie," and in arranging for this long vacation an earnest invitation had been given that he should join them. It offered a tempting break in a dull monotonous life, and was accepted.

Sir Frederick Jermyn's seat lay on the slope of a lovely Berkshire hill, shut round by woods, but overlooking a wide and charming landscape. As Charles Pemberton passed the lodge gates, and saw on either side the evidences of wealth and social station, he began to regret his acceptance, feeling that he would scarcely be at his ease amid surroundings so much above his own homelier state. The cordiality of his welcome, however, soon chased away these misgivings, and he had not been many hours at Wilmore Court before a new set of feelings took possession of his mind.

He had exchanged greetings with Sir Frederick, Turenne, and his brother, and was reading, with their assistance, the noble view from the window, when he was suddenly conscious of another presence in the room, and turning beheld Miss Jermyn, concerning whom, curiously, Teddy in his letters had said nothing, but whose presence, as he thought, made of the hall a temple.

Not that she was a beauty. A fair-haired girl, with large grey eyes and rather blunt features, there was nothing of classic grace about her; but in every line of her fair face there shone the light of a beautiful soul. There was a faint flush on her face, and two good little dimples marked her pleasant smile, as looking straight into his face with frank clear eyes, she held out her hand to greet him, and made captive of him for ever.

"Your brother," she said, "is already one of the family, and he has made you so well known to us that I feel as though I were welcoming an old friend."

"Thank you very much," said he. "I hope I may yet be privileged to give you better reason for regarding me as such."

That night, as he sat in his room long after the household was asleep, he could but ask himself, with a beating heart, whether it were possible that there was in store for him a compensation for much of weariness in his life hitherto, so immeasurably rich as the love of this girl. He never thought of himself as living a life of

self-sacrifice. He had found some things rather hard to bear, and life had perhaps been blank for him—a negative thing. But with Lilian by his side—how naturally the name slid into his thoughts—his whole life would be flooded with joy. Was he too old to hope for such bliss? He was barely thirty-seven in years, and he was younger in that he had never been hackneyed in the ways of love, and his heart had never bowed to a meaner passion.

When he descended next morning there was the light of hope and love in his face.

"Why, Charlie," exclaimed Teddy; "how young you look! If you grow backwards at this rate while you are at Wilmore Court, mother will hardly know which is which."

The young man looked at him from day to day with wonder, for his whole being was transformed. He had never realised till now the buoyancy and energy of the spirit which had been cabined and confined at home. Every day the wonder grew, for every day the light of hope burned clearer and stronger within him.

He watched Teddy and Lilian in frank and happy intercourse, and thought with delight that they were already as brother and sister. Her manner to him was confidential, almost affectionate. He was sure of his ground: more and more sure each day till the very last, on the eve of which he sat in his bedroom, musing much, for he had determined that he would know his fate on the morrow.

There was a tap at the door.

"Come in," he cried, and, turning, saw his brother, with a brilliant flush on his face and a strange fire in his eyes.

"Charlie," said he, in a voice that quivered with some deep feeling, "I want to tell you something."

"Yes," said he kindly, and scarcely noticing these signs of unusual emotion. "And I have, I think, something to tell you. What is your news?"

Teddy walked to the window, and stood there looking out for a few seconds before he asked, speaking abruptly, and without turning:

"Charlie, what do you think of Lilian Jermyn?"

Had the boy then discovered his secret, and was he coming to urge him to the step on which he had already determined? His agitation was so great that he could scarcely find words to speak, but he began to answer slowly in low tones:

"I should, perhaps, have spoken to you earlier, Teddy——"

The young man turned to him impulsively.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "you have seen it all. I might have known that, dear old brother. Charlie, bless me, congratulate me, make much of me; she has promised to be my wife."

He had thrown his arms round his elder brother's neck in the old childish way, and was for a minute or so incoherent in his joy; he did not observe, or if he did observe attributed to a wrong cause his brother's emotion, though he felt in every fibre of his frame a thrill of grateful recognition as his brother kissed his forehead and said: "God bless you, Teddy, and make you worthy of such a treasure."

An hour later as Teddy was leaving him he said: "Oh, Charlie, there was something you were going to tell me. What was it?"

"Oh, that was a small matter, we will not mix it with your joy to-night."

Mrs. Pemberton did not approve of the match. Years were growing on her, and her one hope seemed farther from fulfilment than ever. Her yearning love for her younger son made her more tender than was her wont in all that she said to him, but towards Charles she was cold and bitter in her heart, though she cloaked her coldness and bitterness to herself under the thought of resignation only to the Divine Will.

"It is you," she said, "who have made this match, in your poor short-sighted ambition. You have been permitted to have your own way in all things: and you are right, probably, as this world goes. But the fashion of this world passeth away. You have been selfish all through Edward's career, and sooner or later you will reap as you have sown."

#### CONCERNING NAMES.

MONTAIGNE has observed that in the genealogy of princes there seems to be certain names peculiarly affected—as the Ptolemies of Egypt, the Henrys of England, the Charleses of France, the Baldwins of Flanders, and the Williams of Aquitaine. This hereditary partiality for certain Christian-names would form an interesting subject of enquiry of itself, though it is one which we do not propose at present to pursue. One remarkable fact, however, may be cited in support of this partiality, namely that when Henry, duke of Normandy, son of

Henry the Second, king of England, made a great feast in France, the concourse of nobility and gentry was so great that, for diversion's sake, the guests were divided into groups according to their names. It was found that in the first group, which consisted of those only bearing the name of William, there were no fewer than one hundred and ten knights, without reckoning the ordinary gentlemen and their servants. Now many families, not content with good, short, and easily-pronounceable names, such as John, Alfred, William, Charles, &c., must perforce rake up the Methuselahs, Ezekials, Habakkus, Malachis, and the like, which only result in being a torment to their friends.

There never was a more pronounced movement in nomenclature than that of the Puritans. They resolved to throw off all semblance of the world, or acquaintance with worldly things. So they rushed to the other extreme, and although many of them were very brave and noble men, they exposed themselves to ridicule by their fantastic choice of names. Such names as Mr. Praise God Barebones, Sergeant Zerubbabel Grace, and Swear-not-at-all Ireton, were calculated to excite the risible faculties of the Cavaliers; while there was something even still more ludicrous in such long-sounding typical titles as Hew-Agag-in-pieces-before-the-Lord Robinson, Glory-be-to-God Pennyman, and Obadiah-bind-their-kings-in-chains-and-their-nobles-with-links-of-iron Needham. The Rev. Charles W. Bardsley recently published an amusing work on the Curiosities of Puritan Nomenclature, citing some very singular examples thereof. For instance, we find that one Mr. Hopkinson, of Salehurst, christened three of his daughters Persis, Renewed, and Safe-on-high respectively; while Mr. Thomas Heley, preacher of Warbleton, gave to four of his own offspring the names of Muche-mercy, Increased, Sin-denie, and Fear-not. "For half-a-century Warbleton was, in the names of its parishioners, a complete exegesis of justification by faith without the deeds of the law. Sorry-for-sin Coupard was a peripatetic exhortation to repentance, and No-merit Vynall was a standing denunciation of works." Coming to "grace names," Mr. Bardsley notes that Sir Thomas Carew, Speaker of the House of Commons in James's and Charles's reigns, had a wife Temperance, and four daughters, Patience, Temperance, Silence, and Prudence. In the year 1758, the death of the Rev.

Experience Mayhew is recorded, and the baptism of more than one Diligence, Obedience, Perseverance, Confidence, and Victory. Humiliation was a favourite Christian-name with some families, though its bearers were probably not always so humble as some who have borne the surname of Pride. Preserved was another favourite name, and it is stated that a boy who was washed ashore on the New Jersey coast was named Preserved Fish, a name which he lived to bear with distinction. In 1611 there was baptised at St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, a child to whom was given the name of Job-raked-out-of-the-ashes. Another curious name was Cherubin Diball, but upon this Mr. Bardsley remarks that it was not more singular than many another. "In 1678, Seraphim Marketman is referred to in the last testament of John Kirk. But was it gratitude after all? We have all heard of the wretched father who would persist in having the twins his wife presented to him christened by the names of Cherubin and Seraphim, on the ground that they 'continually do cry.' Perhaps Cherubin Diball and Seraphim Marketman made noise enough for two." Two other singular Puritan names may be mentioned, namely, Stand-fast-on-highStringer of Crowhurst, and Search-the-Scriptures Moreton of Salehurst. But we must leave this interesting branch of our subject, merely remarking that, although as we have said this grotesque Puritan nomenclature has died out, there are still some curious names to be occasionally met with. As Mr. Edward Peacock has recently noted, such names as Original, Philadelphia, Pleasant, and Eden are by no means as yet extinct.

There are a great many popular errors with regard to the etymological derivation of names. Not long ago a writer in Notes and Queries took the opportunity of correcting some of these. For example, Anna-belle is not Anna-bella, or Fair Anna, but it is the feminine of Hannibal, meaning gift or grace of Bel. Arabella is not Ara-bella, or beautiful altar, but Arabilia, a praying woman. It appears that in its anglicised form of Orabel, it was much more common in the thirteenth century than it is at present. Maurice has nothing whatever to do with Mauritus, or a Moor, but comes from Amalric—himmelreich—the kingdom of heaven. The very common name of Ellen is the feminine of Alain, Alan, or Allan, and has no possible connection with Helen, which comes from a different language, and is older by some

thousand years at least. Amy is not from aimée, but from amie. Avice, or Avis, does not exactly mean advice, as many seem to think. It comes from Aed-wis, and means happy wisdom, so that our masculine readers had better secure for their helpmeet (providing they do not already possess one) a lady bearing the name of Avice. Eliza bears no relation to Elizabeth; it is the sister of Louisa, and both are the daughters of Héloïse, which is hidden-wisdom. There is, indeed, it is pointed out, another form of Louisa, or rather Louise, which is the feminine of Louis, but this was scarcely heard of before the sixteenth century. The older Héloïse, from the form of name, Aloisa, Aloisia, or Aloysia, was adapted into mediæval English, as Alesia—a name which our old genealogists always confuse with Alice. Emily and Amelia are not different forms of one name. Emily is from Æmylia, the name of an Etruscan gens. Amelia comes from the Gothic amala, heavenly. Reginald is not derived from Regina, and has nothing to do with a queen. It is Rein-alt, exalted purity. Alice, Adelais, Adelaide, Alisa, Alix, Adeline, are all forms of one name, the root of which is adel, noble. Anne was never used as identical with Annis, or Agnes (of which last the old Scottish Annas is a variety), nor was Elizabeth ever synonymous with Isabel.

Coming now to surnames, we are astonished at their heterogeneous whimsicality. As a genial essayist has observed, the whole of Europe suffered from the deeds of Buonaparte, whose name really means Good-part, or Good-side. When the Hollanders were compelled to receive the Prince of Benevento, that august personage must greatly have belied his name with the Dutch, seeing that it signifies "welcome." "Fortune seems to have intended, by her whimsical distribution of names, sometimes to show the nothingness of a bad name to great men, and sometimes the nothingness of a good name to men of indifferent character." In feudal times men were named from their estates, and in still more ancient days from some peculiar feature in their mental character or personal appearance, and both these methods had some show of reason in them. The appellations could not then be regarded as inconsistent; but amongst nations the Greeks were pre-eminently fond of anticipating the greatness of their offspring by giving them high-sounding names. In some cases

their choice proved sublimely ridiculous, and, in still more, exceedingly unfortunate and malapropos. "With the word love especially they made sad work. Their lovers of horses (*Philippi*), who never cared for a horse; their brotherly-lovers (*Philadelphoi*), who cut the throats of their family; and their lovers-of-the-people (*Philolaoi*), who oppressed the whole community; deserved their appellations quite as much as the great majority of their lovers of wisdom (*Philosophoi*), who disputed so fiercely about the nonentity of pain, or the lawfulness of eating beans. The Athenian populace must have been grievously annoyed to see the philosopher Heavenborn (for this is the meaning of Diogenes) make such a beast of himself."

Other European nations have exhibited equal incongruities in the use of names. Taking first the Romans, it is a moot point whether the greatest of all names, that of Cæsar, which was originally Phoenician, signified an elephant or red-hair; but in any case the great Julius of that ilk was a small-set man with a bald head. Then there are the celebrated warriors and men of genius, the Scipiones or sticks. Daring exploits have rendered illustrious the name of Decius Mus, or General Mouse, while it is not a little singular that some of the most temperate beings mentioned in the whole course of Roman history were their great hogs (*Porcii quasi*, *Porci Catones*). As regards the Italians, they have been, if possible, even more extravagant. Their history furnishes us with the Bentivogli (well-wishers), who have been exceptionally treacherous individuals; with Buoncompagni (good-fellows), and Buonamici (good-friends), who have displayed characteristics the very opposite of those indicated; while an ugly and uncouth writer went by the name of Angelo Poliziano, or polished angel. Then, too, there was a desperate scoundrel mentioned by Benvenuto Cellini, of the name of Michel Angelo (the Angel Michael), who must not be confounded with the great sculptor and painter of that name. On the other hand, Hermolaus the Barbarian (*Barbarus*) was one of the most learned and polite men of the fifteenth century. Mankind has been scandalised by a series of popes, who called themselves blessed and pious (*Benedetto e Pio*); and one at least of the Holy Fathers, named Innocent, parted at a very early age with the virtue symbolised by his name. The French also have been almost as infelicitous in the use

of names. They have had many Capets (heads) who lacked in an extraordinary degree the substance usually found in the cranium—brains. The most sanguinary and cruel of the French Revolutionists was St. Just, or the holy and the just; while many bearing the names of St. Pierre and St. Croix (Saint Peters and Holy Crosses) have led vicious and scandalous lives. Other curiosities in Gallic names will readily suggest themselves to the reader.

But we are not without these incongruities in England. We have amongst us Clements, who can be stern and overbearing; Gallops, amongst the slowest men of our acquaintance; Longs, who are something under five feet in height; Loves, who certainly do not "let brotherly love continue;" and Deaths, who look much more like living than those with a less sepulchral name. Many of the Swifts and the Quicks are noted for their slothfulness; there are Golightlys, who tread very heavily indeed; Heavisesides, who are the very soul of company, and can keep the table in a roar; Joys, Gladmans, Merrys, and Merryweathers, who each and all afflict us by their melancholy; Stocks and Stones, who are really very clever; Smarts, who are very dense; Whites, who are dark; and Blacks and Browns who are exceeding fair. Then there are the Moodys, amongst the jolliest of men; the Nobles, who do not always rise to the dignity of their appellation; Edens, whose lives are anything but of a paradisal character; Ravens, who are white; Honeys, who are the reverse of sweet; and men who rejoice in the name of Wiseman, but are far from being the natural successors of Solomon. The field thus opened up is an endless one, but our excursion in it must come to a close. Human nature is the victim of many anomalies, many of them being imposed by itself. That of our nomenclature, while perhaps the least harmful, is certainly not the least amusing. It has, of course, like most things, its graver aspect, and the study of many of our English names, both Christian and surname, may be rendered both an entertaining and a profitable one.

## VISITED ON THE CHILDREN. BY THEO GIFT.

### CHAPTER XII. IN CHADLEIGH CHURCH.

THE Jacobsons of Birchwood, or rather Mrs. Jacobson, her governess, a pale young woman of seven-and-twenty, and a very

ugly small daughter of seven, were at lunch when Gareth arrived ; and a perfect volley of exclamations greeted him from his hostess as he entered the dining-room : also an ecstatic clapping of hands from the ugly little daughter, and a blush from the governess. Gareth Vane very seldom did enter a room full of women and children without exciting these latter manifestations from some among them ; so he merely repaid them by a smile which adult and juvenile appeared to consider as sufficient, and went forward to take the two very much be-jewelled hands which Mrs. Jacobson tendered him.

"So you have come, after all ! Well, I had quite given you up and was just abusing you finely ; wasn't I, Miss Saunders ? I said you were a perfidious wretch, and so you were ; for you promised to come down by the twelve-thirty train in time for lunch and to go with me to the Epsom sports ; and I sent to the station to meet you. No, you needn't look miserable about that ; I was expecting some fish as well, and it did come ; but Vicky here was in despair at your breaking your word. How did you arrive after all, and what kept you ? The salmon-cutlets are all cold, and there is nothing fit to eat on the table ; but I'll have something up in a moment. Sit down, do. Are you very tired ?"

"I am not tired at all, and I don't want anything up, and there's nothing I love more in the world than cold salmon-cutlets," said Gareth, dropping into a chair beside Vicky. "Also, my dear Mrs. Jacobson, I didn't break my word. I came by the coach, and am prepared to escort you to the sports whenever you like to put on your bonnet ; so please don't abuse me any more or call me bad names. I want you to tell me something instead."

"What is it ? You look quite excited."

"I am excited. I have just met an angel, and I want to know her name."

"Her name--an angel ?"

"Yes. This angel was on a bay mare, the latter a tolerably neat animal with one white stocking. If you can't tell me who she is I shall go forth and hang myself as soon as ever the sports are over and I have given you into Matt's care."

"How like you ? Some woman, of course, and before you have been in the parish five minutes !" laughed Mrs. Jacobson. "Isn't he incorrigible, Miss Saunders ?"

Miss Saunders, looking a little paler than before, smiled faintly in answer. Perhaps at some period of his intimacy

with the Jacobsons (and he had known them some time ; Matt the husband being a stockbroker in the City, and having assisted at selling out some of his few hundreds on more than one occasion) Gareth had turned a not ungentle eye on the slim, interesting-looking governess, and had spoken a soft word or two for her comfort. Oppressed governesses, when pretty, always found a champion in this reprobate brother of Mrs. Hamilton ; and though Miss Saunders was not at all oppressed, she had certainly been pretty once, and he may not have stood strictly on the bond as to her claim to notice. Now, she was hardly pretty at all ; and, therefore, though she remembered the soft words he had forgotten them. Even the sweetness of his smile came by nature, not intent, and was diffused equally over governess, child, and luncheon-table. He did not hear Mrs. Jacobson's appeal to her as he answered : "A woman ? Well, I suppose so. She was in woman's form, anyhow. My dear friend, you must know her ; for she lives somewhere in this neighbourhood and she knows you. She told me so."

"Told you so ! When ?"

"Just now when I was walking by her side under Box Hill."

"Walking with her when you don't even know her name ! Very improper, indeed ! and I am quite sure she was telling you a fib. I have no young lady acquaintances who ride about alone on bay mares or ramble over Box Hill with fast young men. Don't tell me any more about her."

"I won't if you tell me something instead. Let me set you right on two points, however," and there was a little touch of earnestness superadded to the languid gaiety of Gareth's tone which showed he meant what he said. "She was not riding alone, and she did not wander over the hill with me ; and I am very sure she was not improper in any way, even by communication with my fastness."

"What did she do then, and how did you come across her ?"

"She had dismounted to gather wild flowers, and her horse bolted. I happened to be near, having missed the right turning on my way here, and caught the brute for her. She allowed me to lead it back to the place where her companion (a parson by his rig) had left her, and then dismissed me. Voilà tout !"

"Dismissed you with some of the flowers by way of thank-offering !" said Mrs. Jacobson, glancing at Gareth's bouquet ; then

without waiting for him to deny the imputation, if he had been going to do so : "A girl riding with a clergyman—brown horse with one white stocking ! Why, you must mean— Was she fair, rather pretty, with blue eyes ?"

"She was fair certainly ; light hair, and the bluest eyes I ever saw. As to 'rather pretty,' well, yes, I daresay a woman would call her so. That's a matter of opinion, however."

Mrs. Jacobson did not see the innuendo.

"Well, I daresay you wouldn't think her so," she said, "for she is not in your style—not at least if she is the girl I think ; and I am pretty sure of it. Fair, blue eyes, and riding with a clergyman. Oh, it must be—mustn't it, Miss Saunders ?—Miss—"

"Dysart," said Miss Saunders, speaking for the first time and in the tone of one who thought all this fuss very absurd.

"Yes, exactly. She's a Miss Dysart. There are two of them ; but I only know the eldest, and they live with their mother somewhere between Epsom and Chadleigh End, a house overlooking the park."

"Ah, indeed ! Close to where I met her the first time then," cried Gareth.

"Oh, then this is not the first meeting ? Take care, Mr. Gareth, or you will have young Ashleigh down on you. I am beginning to be sorry I asked you here."

"That is impolite, so I won't believe it. Who, pray, is young Ashleigh ?"

"Her lover, the curate of Chadleigh End. They ride about everywhere together ; and Mrs. de Boonyen told me he gave her that horse. Oh, I believe he's very well to do, a son of the rector of Dilworth and nephew of Sir William Ashleigh. They are county people, you know ; and people say that Miss Dysart's mamma strained heaven and earth to make up the match."

"I should hardly think it was necessary unless the young man was made of stone. The Dysarts are not well-to-do, I suppose ?"

"Oh, no ; poor as rats, the De Boonyens say ; but proud to an extent. I'm quite complimented at Miss Dysart claiming my acquaintance, for they hold themselves so aloof in general that they will hardly know anybody."

"Evidently that rule has exceptions, for she certainly said she knew you," Gareth put in as a conciliatory stroke. "And now tell me about these sports. Matt only said I was to be sure to get down in time for them, and that he would meet us there in the evening."

Gareth had said and learnt as much as he cared to do for the present on the subject of Sybil Dysart, and having changed the conversation he kept it in entirely different channels for the rest of the afternoon, only taking pains to make himself more than usually agreeable to his hostess.

She was just the woman to like direct compliments, and he knew it and dosed her with them. A woman young, good-looking, of the large-nosed, full-lipped Judaic type, more than half a Jewess, indeed, and less than three-quarters a lady, Gareth knew that by a little love-making and a good deal of flattery he could twist her round his finger, and bided his time accordingly. It was only when they were driving home through the dusk of a May twilight, and had nearly reached Chadleigh End, that he took occasion to ask her in the most careless tone he could assume :

"By the way, isn't it somewhere about here that you said my fair equestrian lives ?"

To his great delight Mrs. Jacobson not only nodded but pointed to a house not far off.

"Yes, that's the place, behind the laurel hedge on the right. I daresay young Ashleigh is there at present."

Gareth mentally cursed young Ashleigh. He had no particular reason for doing so, seeing that the latter had done him no harm, and that he did not even know him by sight ; but he cursed him all the same and with an inward heartiness which gave him courage to ask aloud :

"If he's a man of taste, he probably is. But I don't think he is a man of taste, or he wouldn't have left that sweet creature to pick wild flowers by herself this morning. My dear Mrs. Jacobson, here's something to amuse us. Let us cut him out."

"Us !" said Mrs. Jacobson, laughing. "Gareth Vane, don't talk nonsense."

"I'm not talking nonsense ; I mean it. It is too early for grouse ; but the game laws don't apply to all sport. I want to know that little beauty better ; and as you tell me she is engaged, the luxury will be a safe one on both sides. Won't you help me ? Take me to call there."

"The idea ! Why, I don't call there myself. I've never even seen the mother, and they tell me she is an iceberg."

"Then we must manage it some other way. When you make difficulties you of course inspire one to overcome them. Where preacheth this clerical lover ?"

"In Chadleigh church, of course. Where else?"

"And of course the 'lily maid' goes to hear him. My friend, it is not much in my way, but we will attend Chadleigh church next Sunday."

"And you pretended not to think Sybil Dysart pretty?" said Mrs. Jacobson. "What a shameless humbug you are! Well, it's a beautiful little church and a nice drive, so you shall be spoilt for once. Remember, though, if the mother is there I shan't dream of introducing you to your *inamorata*. I've no fancy for being snubbed because a dowdy old woman happens to be niece to an earl."

Mrs. Dysart very seldom did go to church. As she told Lionel's mother on one occasion, her health did not permit her to do so. She might have added with equal truth that young men's sermons (even those of her son-in-law elect) bored far more than they interested her, and that of Lion's ideas in particular she had full and plentiful feasts served out without grudge or parsimony in the seclusion of her own parlour. But with Sybil and Jenny it was quite otherwise; and, as Gareth rightly opined, it must have been a weighty circumstance which would have kept the girls from their weekly attendance at a church, which was not only endeared to them by being their own, but as having for its pastor the future husband of one and the adopted brother of the other. Perhaps there was nothing that Jenny found much more enjoyable in her somewhat uneventful life than Lion's sermons. So often they turned on something the two had already discussed or argued over; and though in that case the argument was often renewed later, and fought out with such irreverent heat by this independent-minded young lady, that Sybil's more submissive spirit was quite scandalised, Lion was always sure at any rate of his young antagonist's full and eager attention, the great bright eyes meeting his at every point with quick appreciation; while sometimes on the other hand Sybil's snowy lids drooped over hers lower than even the meekness of devotion required; and, but for the mortification of admitting such an idea, he might have almost fancied she was asleep.

On the Sunday following Princess's escapade, the two fair faces were visible as usual in their accustomed pew, wearing more than their usual likeness to one

another, because subdued by a common spirit of devotion and recollection, and more than their usual unlikeness to the rest of the gay, not to say over-dressed little congregation of Chadleigh End, by the Puritan simplicity of their plain close-fitting grey dresses and bonnets, the only finery about them a little black lace scarf knotted round either throat, with a white rosebud nestled into it. The lace was of real Chantilly, and very fine. The rosebuds were real, too, and freshly gathered; but I doubt whether Mrs. Dysart would have permitted the latter adornment if Sybil had not cunningly secured Lion's admiration for it first, and ordered Jenny to don one also, that the mother's indulgence might find a double claimant.

Jenny obeyed cheerfully. She would have donned a rose or a domino with equal willingness to please her sister, and thought no more about it afterwards. She never gave a remembrance to the flower when once she had passed through the church door. The fragrance of it only blended with the notes of the organ (a better one than is generally found in village churches) to lift her senses into a higher and more ideal sphere; but Sybil was not above a little innocent girlish vanity in such matters, and could not help a gentle feeling of satisfaction every time she felt the cool touch of the petals against her skin. She knew the blossom was no whiter than that soft white chin above it, Lion had told her so, and as she raised her eyes to his during the sermon, she wondered if the thought were still in his mind.

It was not! I do not mean any disparagement to his ardour as a lover; for the young curate was well aware of the presence of his betrothed, and perhaps preached all the better for an occasional glance at her fair pure face; but she might have worn a bearskin or a yashmak without his being in any way cognizant of it. He would have liked her just as well.

To-day he was giving a sermon after his own heart. The text he had taken for it was: "Render therefore to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's," and he used it to illustrate the duties of tenants and labourers to their landlords and employers, and those of the latter to them. Not a bad text for an agricultural congregation; but somehow in Lion's levelling hands the obligations of the landlords waxed far larger than those of the tenants; while even that "tribute penny" which was to be rendered to Caesar

in return, grew small by degrees and "beautifully less" until it had dwindled into such insignificant dimensions that it showed a palpable ungenerosity and meanness in Cæsar to stoop to exact it at all.

It was a sermon which would have infuriated Mr. Chawler and the Dilworth squirearchy in general, and shocked and angered his father; but which was doubtless exceedingly satisfactory to Hodge sitting at the lower end of the church; or rather would have been so supposing that Hodge had understood anything about it. It is perhaps rather a hindrance, however, to the enthusiasm of that rural but somewhat thick-skulled individual's admirers that he generally finds their perorations on his behalf quite as unintelligible as the counter arguments of his tyrants and oppressors, and that, unless provided with an interpreter, the former do not receive as much gratitude from him as the energy of their efforts in his service deserve.

Hodge understood Lion perfectly when he was sent for to the vicarage and rated in good frank language as from man to man for being drunk and lazy. He did the same when the curate sent poor consumptive old Hodge a jug of ale and plate of meat from his own table every Sunday, and apprenticed Widow Hodge's eldest son to a good trade when his father's death left the boy with seven others on the poor woman's hands.

All that sort of thing was plain and simple enough; and Hodge modified the sheepish scowl with which he received the lecture by grinning at the charity, and vowing "Parson were a good 'un in the main, an' noan so bad there mightn't be worser;" but when Lion trenched on higher ranges of thought or action, when he met poor lost Lizzie Hodge sitting under a hedge with her fever-stricken child on her knee, and taking the little lad from her, carried him right across Epsom Common, and into the town, through a blinding snow-storm, and with the exhausted outcast mother clinging to his arm; and when on the same day he sharply refused to allow even the smallest charity to able-bodied men and women who hadn't earned it, he became wholly unintelligible to the bucolic mind, and more than slightly repellent. Squire Chawler's curses conjoined with his beef and coals at Christmas were far easier to comprehend, as were the indiscriminate sixpences and soup-tickets of the Miss de Boonyens even when accompanied by the

donors' shrinking avoidance of the objects of their liberality; and Hodge accepted both of these, and ran after them with a servile greediness which at times lashed his would-be champion and idealiser into almost impatient despair.

To-day, if he roused excitement in anyone it was in Jenny. Disagreeing utterly with Lion's social theories, while reverencing and admiring with her whole heart the nobility of character which gave them birth, he kept her in a small tempest of enthusiasm and depreciation which held her attention riveted on his words to the exclusion of all else; and only when the hymn was given out at the end, and she turned towards her sister with the book which they shared in common, did she notice that the latter's cheeks too were glowing with equal fire, and her eyes brilliant with an expression quite different from the angelic indifference which they usually wore in church.

Jenny was sure that Sybil was feeling with her, and burnt with eagerness to discuss the whole subject as soon as they were free. She rather hurried their exit from church when the service was over in her impatience to get away from the other people and begin the comments which were tingling on her lips, and had just succeeded in beguiling her sister into a different path from the rest, when a very stylishly-dressed lady whom she only knew by sight disengaged herself from the crowd, and crossing the grass held out her hand to Sybil with a greeting quite effusive in its cordiality.

"How do you do, Miss Dysart? What a long time since we have met! And what a clever preacher you have! Quite delightful to hear anything so original. I almost wish we were in this parish, but at any rate my friend Mr. Vane here owns I haven't brought him to church to-day to hear twaddle. By the way, let me introduce—Mr. Vane, Miss Dysart. What! You have met before?"

"Twice, I think," said Gareth with a smiling look into Sybil's eyes; and those stag-like ones of Jenny's opened to indignant width. A handsome enough man, this stranger; but what business had any stranger to make her sister blush by staring at her so boldly, and to offer her his hand with almost the eagerness of an old friend?

"Very free and easy! I hope she will snub him well," said Miss Jenny to herself.

[December 18, 1860.]

Apparently Sybil had left church in a more charitable mood. She let Gareth take her hand and even smiled too ; and he bent a little forward and said something which if Jenny could have believed her ears sounded like—

"You see I was right. We have met again. I am so glad." At that moment, however, Mrs. Jacobson had turned to her, and, in listening to and answering her, the girl felt that she might not have caught the words properly. She had not bargained, however, for what followed. The stock-broker's lively young wife was certainly disposed to earn her guest's gratitude by no half measures, and to that end she poured out pretty speeches and civilities on Jenny, asking why she and her sister never came to Birchwood. The latter had called once, and Mrs. Jacobson had quite hoped she would do so again. It wasn't so very far, nothing like the distance to Dilworth, and she knew they visited there. Indeed, she would have called at Hillbrow herself but that never having met Mrs. Dysart she felt rather shy. She was quite charmed that they had happened to encounter one another that morning.

While all this was being uttered she had moved on, keeping Jenny at her side, while Gareth and Sybil were left to follow. Jenny would have found it impossible to detach herself without positive rudeness ; but it was not pleasant to her, for she knew nothing of Mrs. Jacobson save that she had once met her at a juvenile cricket-match at Chadleigh Park, and that she had heard Lion allude to her as "rather rapid." She disliked "rapid" ladies, however, with all her heart, and Mrs. Jacobson's over-bright eyes and bloom, her gorgeous dress, her jewellery, and the lisp with which she spoke, all tended to confirm her belief in the justice of the stricture and to inspire Jenny with repugnance. She answered very coldly, her soft high-bred tones sounding as if iced, and walked as slowly as she could, glancing behind her for her sister at intervals in the hope of a rescue ; but it is not easy for nineteen when shy and modest to snub nine-and-twenty when neither, and Mrs. Jacobson did not seem to see the intention.

"This is your way, too, I suppose," she said cheerfully. "I told our coachman to wait for us in the village ; for my horses are young and not very well broken, and a clash of church bells are apt to make them skittish. By the way, you ride, don't you, Miss Dysart ? Your sister does, I know. Such a pretty horse, almost the same colour as my Rosabelle. Why don't you ride over to Birchwood to lunch some day ?"

Certainly there was no way of checking Mrs. Jacobson's friendliness or getting away from her, and she walked on at such a pace that Jenny was afraid Sybil would feel herself deserted, and did not wonder she found it impossible to keep company with them. It was a comfort to her to reflect that when they gained the high road their ways lay in opposite directions ; but even then Mrs. Jacobson made a stand, and not satisfied with saying good-bye, assailed Sybil with the same warmth of invitation which she had lavished on her sister.

"Your sister tells me she doesn't ride. I am so sorry ; for I have been teasing her to come and see me ; but you do, I know, so you have no excuse. Now do come to luncheon some day. I shall be so glad. I've been wanting to see more of you ever since that pleasant afternoon on the cricket-field, and you must excuse informality. We Mickleham people are shockingly informal, aren't we, Mr. Vane ?"

"Are you ?" he said, laughing. "If so, I am glad of it. I like informality when I like the people it brings me among."

He looked towards Sybil as he spoke, and though her face was turned towards Mrs. Jacobson he saw the colour mount into it.

"I shall be very glad to come some day," she said shyly.

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